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A
LETTER

FROM

His Grace the Duke of Richmond

TO

Lieutenant Colonel SHARMAN,

Chairman to the Committee of Correspondence appointed by the Delegates of forty-five
Corps of Volunteers, assembled
at Lisburn in Ireland ;

With NOTES,

BY

A Member of the Society for Constitutional Information,

L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Editor of this constitutional and truly patriotic Letter, cannot be suspected of being actuated by views of pecuniary profit, when the low price at which it is offered to the public is considered. Whatever may be the demand for it, he must necessarily be a loser.

Detesting that absurd and pernicious assertion of Mr. Burke, that it is the "misfortune of the age that every thing is to be discussed;" he on the contrary heartily concurs in opinion with the association lately formed at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, that the circulation of cheap publications on topics of public discussion, is the true way to undeceive those persons who have been misled and deluded by specious reasonings and false representations, as well as to inform those who have hitherto been ignorant of their real interest, and unconcerned about the most important truth.

Thus for instance, great pains have been taken, and are still taking, by "evil designing men," to persuade the uninformed, that the Friends of Parliamentary Reform are only a few Republicans and Levelers, who wish to overturn all government, and to introduce, anarchy and confusion; and that to desire any alteration or improvement is in effect to be an enemy to the constitution; a calumny which this publication will effectually refute, by exhibiting a nobleman of the first rank and of acknowledged abilities, a professed and steady friend of our present Government, by King, Lords and Commons, and, at the same time, a most zealous and able advocate for the most complete and effectual reform in the representation of the people that has ever been proposed.

Let the appeal be calmly made to the understandings of the public, and the cause of Truth and Liberty has nothing to fear; nor will the Editor of this spirited and luminous composition have to regret the trouble and expence he has bestowed upon it, if its circulation shall in any degree contribute to soften prejudice, and diffuse information on the great subject of Parliamentary Reform; a subject which, in the opinion of the noble Duke, "of all others, most deserves the attention of the public, as it would include all other advantages which a nation can wish."

A
LETTER

FROM

His Grace the Duke of RICHMOND,

TO

Lieutenant-Colonel SHARMAN,

OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

“SIR,

“I Have been honoured with a Letter from Belfast, dated the 19th of July last, written in the name of the Committee of Correspondence, appointed by the delegates of forty-five Volunteer Corps, assembled at Lisburn on the 1st of the same month, “for taking preparatory steps to forward their intentions on the subject of a more equal Representation of the People in Parliament,” and signed by their secretary, Henry Joy, jun. Esq.

In this letter, after shewing the corrupt state of the Boroughs in Ireland, the general opinion of the people that the Constitution can be restored to its ancient purity and vigor by no other means than a parliamentary reform, and informing me of the steps which have been taken and taking by the Volunteers, in determining to procure this desirable object, the Committee is pleased “to request my sentiments and advice as to the best, most eligible, and most practicable mode of destroying, restraining, or counteracting this hydra of corruption, Borough Influence, in order to lay my opinion before the provincial assembly of delegates, which is to be held at Dungannon on the 8th of September next.”

This great mark of confidence, from gentlemen in whom so much trust is placed, does me great honour; for as I have

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not the pleasure of being personally known to any of them, I can owe it but to the favourable opinion they are pleased to entertain of my constant and zealous endeavours in the public service*.

I am sensible that the only proper return I can make for this honourable distinction, is to obey their commands in the best manner I am able; for although my insufficiency for so arduous a task would afford me but too good an excuse for declining it, yet I feel it would be inconsistent with my ideas of the obligation every man is under to serve the public as well as he can, if I was to refuse giving my opinions, such as they are, when thus called upon by a respectable body of Gentlemen.

Besides my inability, I have to regret the want of time to collect and arrange my thoughts in such a manner as to be fit to appear before you, and the necessary limits of a letter, which will not admit of the extensive investigation which a subject of this vast importance deserves; for although I fear I must be long, I am sensible I cannot do it justice.

The subject of a parliamentary reform is that which of all others, in my opinion, most deserves the attention of the public, as I conceive it would include every other advantage which a nation can wish; and I have no hesitation in saying that from every consideration which I have been able to give to this great question, that for many years has occupied my mind, and from every day's experience to the present hour, I am more and more convinced that *the restoring the right of voting universally to every man, not incapacitated by nature for want of reason, or by law for the commission of crimes, together with annual elections*, is the only reform that can be effectual and permanent. I am further convinced that it is the only reform that is practicable.

All other plans that are of a palliative nature have been found insufficient to interest and animate the great body of the people, from whose earnestness alone any reform can be expected. A long exclusion from any share in the legisla-

* The noble Duke was, at this time, a member of the Society for Constitutional Information, of which he was afterwards the President. The Society was instituted in the year 1780, and their principal object, of which they have never since lost sight, was to excite the attention of their countrymen to the important subject of Parliamentary Reform. His Grace strenuously assisted. *Sed tempora mutantur*. He is now master of the Ordnance, and a member of the Cabinet.

ture of their country, has rendered the great mass of the people indifferent whether the monopoly that subsists, continues in the hands of a more or less extended company; or whether it is divided by them into shares of somewhat more or less just proportions. The public feels itself unconcerned in these contests, except as to the oppressions it endures, and the exactions it suffers, which it knows must continue so long as the people remain deprived of all controul over their representatives*. This indifference of theirs, when the last attempt was made for additional county members, was used by our opponents as an argument against all reform; it was asked with a triumphant air, where are the petitions from the inhabitants of Birmingham, Manchester, Halifax, and other great unrepresented towns? And their silence was deemed a proof of their acquiescence and satisfaction in the present form of elections! The truth is, that the people have been so often deceived, that they will now scarcely trust any set of men; and nothing but self evident conviction, that a measure tends effectually to the recovery of their rights, can, or indeed ought, to interest them in its favour.

The lesser reform has been attempted with every possible advantage in its favour; not only from the zealous support of the advocates for a more effectual one, but from the assistance of men of great weight, both in and out of power. But with all these temperaments and helps it has failed. Not one profelyte has been gained from corruption, nor has the least ray of hope been held out from any quarter. that the House of Commons was inclined to adopt any other mode of reform. The weight of corruption has crushed this more gentle, as it would have defeated any more efficacious plan in the same circumstances. From that quarter, therefore, I have nothing to hope. IT IS FROM THE PEOPLE AT LARGE THAT

* Mr. Justice Ashurst, in his late charge to the Grand Jury of Middlesex, differs widely from the noble Duke. He represents the British government as all perfection, and will not allow that any such thing as oppression or undue exaction exists! According to him, all our laws and ordinances are pure, mild, and beneficent. All the subjects of the state are equally protected, and there is nothing that any man has the least reason to complain of! If it be so, what wicked wretches must the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Pitt, and their friends, in and out of Parliament, have been, to call so loudly and so long for so important an alteration in the structure of our government! But the learned judge goes farther, and strange to tell, he assures us, that it is easy for every man to know what the law is! Whereas it is notorious that the greatest lawyers themselves do not know what it is: How indeed should they, when one hundred volumes in folio are not able to contain it?

I EXPECT ANY GOOD* And I am convinced, that the only way to make them feel that they are really concerned in the business, is to come to a fair trial, for their *fair trial, and indisputable rights of universal representation*. I call them such, not only from my own conviction, but from the admission of the friends to the more moderate plan, who, in the second address of the Yorkshire committee to the people, confess that our claims are founded on the true principles of the constitution, and only object to them on account of impracticability. But their plan has now had a fair trial, and (if it is from the inclination of parliament that practicability is to be expected) has been found as impracticable as ours. The more extensive plan, at the same time that its operation is more complete, depends on a more effectual support, that of the people.

I am also persuaded, that if the scheme for additional county members had proceeded any further, infinite difficulties would have arisen in adjusting it. Neither the Yorkshire committee

* This declaration is in perfect agreement with the spirit of the following advertisement, which appeared more than a year before this letter was written :

“ Thatched-House Tavern, May 16th, 1782.

“ At a numerous and respectable meeting of Members of Parliament,

“ friendly to a Constitutional Reformation, and of Members of several com-

“ mittees of counties and cities; Present

The Duke of Richmond,

Lord Surrey,

Lord Mahon,

The Lord Mayor,

Sir Watkin Lewes,

Mr. Duncombe,

Sir C. Wray,

The Hon. William Pitt,

The Rev. Mr. Wyvill,

Major Cartwright,

Mr. John Horne Tooke,

Alderman Wilkes,

Doctor Jebb,

&c. &c.

“ Resolved unanimously, That the motion of the Hon. William Pitt, on the

“ 7th instant, for the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the state

“ of the representation of the people of Great Britain, and to report the same

“ to the house; and also what step it might be necessary to take, having been

“ defeated by a motion for the order of the day, it is become indispensably ne-

“ cessary that application should be made to Parliament, by petitions from the

“ collective body of the people, in their respective districts, requesting a sub-

“ stantial reformation of the Commons House of Parliament.

“ Resolved unanimously, That this meeting considering that a general ap-

“ plication by the collective body of the people to the House of Commons

“ cannot be made before the close of the present session, is of opinion, that

“ *the sense of the people should be taken at such times as may be convenient*

“ *during this summer, in order to lay their several petitions before Parliament*

“ *early in the next session, when their Proposals for a Parliamentary Refor-*

“ *mation (without which neither the liberty of the nation can be preserved,*

“ *nor the permanency of a wise and virtuous administration can be secure)* may

“ receive that ample and mature discussion which so momentous a ques-

“ tion demands.

nor Mr. Pitt have given the detail of their plan*. A just repartition would have been a most intricate task, for where different interests are separately represented, the proportion is not very easy to ascertain. The doubt you state concerning this mode of reform appears to me well founded; a few great families might divide a county between them, and chuse the members by a house list, like the East India Directors. Another difficulty from the increase of the number of members, which might render the House more tumultuous than deliberate, has its weight. But the greatest objection, in my opinion, to this and to every other narrow and contracted plan of reform, is, that it proceeds upon the same bad principle as the abuse it pretends to rectify; it is still partial and unequal; a vast majority of the community is still left unrepresented; and its most essential concerns, life, liberty, and property, continue in the absolute disposal of those whom they do not chuse, and over whom they have no controul. In the arrangements of plans of this kind there is no leading principle to determine that the addition ought to be, one hundred, fifty, or two hundred; that the allotment should be according to the population, property, or taxes paid in each county; that any supposed proportion between the landed and trading interest is the just one, and that the division of county and city members will correspond with this proportion when found. All is at sea without any compass to enable us to distinguish the safe from the dangerous course.

But in the more liberal and great plan of *universal representation*, a clear and distinct principle at once appears that cannot lead us wrong. Not convenient but right: if it is not a maxim of our constitution, that a British subject is to be governed only by laws to which he has consented by himself or his representative, we should instantly abandon the error; but if it is the essential of the dom. founded on the eternal principles of justice and wisdom, and our unalienable birth-right, we should not hesitate in asserting it. Let us then but determine to act on this broad principle, of *giving to every man his own*, and we shall immediately get rid of all

* Mr. Pitt, the present First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, &c. was then an active mover of this popular business in the House of Commons. He several times brought it forward with much apparent zeal. But during the last session of parliament, judging it no longer necessary to repeat this farce, he boldly threw off the mask, and avowed his utter aversion to any alteration whatever.

the perplexities to which the narrow notions of partiality and exclusion must ever be subject*.

"In the digesting a plan upon this noble foundation we shall not find any difficulty that the most common understanding and pains will not easily surmount. It does not require half the ingenuity of a common tax bill; and as a proof of this assertion I myself drew the form of a bill for this purpose, which I presented to the House of Lords in 1780; not as a perfect work, but merely to shew how easily the objections to the practicability of the plan, and the inconveniences that are suggested might be got over.

I believe the sending you a copy of my bill will be the best way of explaining its operations. I have not one ready at this moment, but it shall soon follow this letter.

I shall therefore only mention at present a few of its provisions, which I think entirely remove the most plausible objections that have been urged against it.

The present number of members in the House of Commons is preserved, so that all apprehension from too numerous an assembly ceases.

An account of the whole number of males of age in the kingdom is to be taken and divided by the the number of members to be sent, which will find the quota of electors to chuse one member; from the best accounts I can now get, it will be about *two thousand six hundred*; these are to be formed into districts or boroughs from the most contiguous parishes; and by having all the elections throughout the kingdom in one and the same day, and taken in each parish, all fear of riot and tumult vanishes.

The great expence of elections, which arises chiefly from the cost of conveying electors to the place of poll, and entertaining them there and on the road, will be no more when every man will vote in his own parish. Bribery must entirely cease; in a single borough it would be difficult, on so many as to have any effect, impossible. The numbers to be bought would be infinitely too great for any purse. Besides, annual parliaments, by their frequency, and by their shortness, would doubly operate in preventing corruption.

* The Duke of Richmond, when the subject was mentioned in the house of Lords last winter, declared that his *opinions* were not changed, yet signified his intention to oppose any scheme of reform that might be proposed, upon the stale pretence that this is not the proper time.—Can any time be improper *to give to every man his own?*

The vast expence of petitions to parliament on account of illegal returns, would be reduced almost to nothing. The points on which these contests generally turn, are the qualifications of the electors under the numberless restrictions the present laws have imposed, which require the attendance of witnesses, the production of records, and are subject to infinite dispute. But when no other qualification should be necessary but that of being a British subject, and of age, there can be but little left to contend upon as to the right of electors to vote. All other questions that could afford ground for a petition would be trifling, and might be decided in one day. Many other objections are obviated by the bill, but it is needless here to mention them.

But there is another sort of objection against which no provision can be made, as it is merely imaginary. It is feared by some, that the influence of power and riches will give to the aristocracy so great a lead in these elections, as to place the whole government in their hands. Others again dread, that when paupers and the lowest orders of the people shall have an equal vote with the first commoner in the kingdom, we shall fall into all the confusion of a democratic republic. The contrariety of these two apprehensions might of itself be a sufficient proof that neither extreme will take place. It is true, that the poorest man in the kingdom will have an equal vote with the first, for the choice of the person to whom he trusts his all; and I think he ought to have that equal degree of security against oppression. It is also true, that men of superior fortunes will have a superior degree of weight and influence; and I think that as education and knowledge generally attend property, those who possess them ought to have weight and influence with the more ignorant. But the essential difference will be, that although the people may be led, they cannot be driven. Property will have its weight, as it ever must have, in all governments; and I conceive, that in this plan it will precisely find its just proportion combined with talents and character. A man of great property that is beloved and esteemed, will, as he ought, have the greatest sway; but tyranny and oppression, though attended with riches, may be resisted, and will no longer be attended with a burdane tenure at command.

Another subject of apprehension is, that the principle of allowing to every man an equal right to vote tends to equality in other respects, and to level property. To me it seems to have

have a direct contrary tendency. The equal rights of men to security from oppression, and to the enjoyments of life and liberty, strikes me as perfectly compatible with their unequal shares of industry, labour, and genius, which are the origin of inequality of fortunes *. The equality and inequality of men are both founded in nature; and whilst we do not confound the two, and only support her establishments, we cannot err. The protection of property appears to me one of the most essential ends of society; and so far from injuring it by this plan, I conceive it to be the only means of preserving it; for the present system is hastening with great strides to a perfect *equality in universal poverty*.

It has been said, that this plan of extending the right of voting to every individual creates much uneasiness in the minds of quiet and well-disposed persons; and that if paupers, vag bonds, and persons of no property, were left out, there would be no objection to extend it to all householders and persons paying taxes, and that the same division into districts might take place. My answer is, that I know of no man, let him be ever so poor, who in his consumption of food and use of raiment, does not pay taxes, and that I would wish to encourage an enthusiasm for his country in the breast of every subject, by giving him his just share in its government. I readily admit, that such an alteration would be a vast improvement; but I must prefer the adhering rigidly to a self-evident principle, especially when attended with no inconvenience in the execution, that I can foresee. Besides, we should again fall into the difficulties of drawing the line of separation, and into the disputes about qualification.

The apprehensions that our government will become too democratic, have been urged on another ground. It has been said, that the House of Commons has usurped the whole power of government: that the crown in reality no longer possesses its negative, and must in all things be ruled by the House of Commons: that the House of Lords, in

* Nothing can be more just than this observation. Yet an association formed on pretence of securing Liberty and Property, but in reality for perpetuating all manner of abuses; John Reeves, Esq. chairman, is at this moment either weakly or wickedly endeavouring to persuade the world that when the friends of liberty speak of equal *rights* and equal *representation*, they mean to equalize *property*, to level all distinctions, to overturn all government, and to introduce anarchy and confusion. What credit can a society obtain with the public, which sets out with such gross and scandalous misrepresentations?

consequence

consequence of its exclusion (by the will of the House of Commons and not by law) from interfering in money bills, no longer in fact exercises the functions of a branch of the legislature: that the only means by which the balance of the constitution is now in any degree preserved, is by the *irregular* influence of the Crown and of the Peers in the House of Commons: and that if they are totally excluded from interference there, as it is supposed will be the case if this bill passes, and are not restored to their original share of power, the equilibrium will be destroyed, and the Government become purely democratic.

To remedy this objection, it has been answered by others, that it is but just and reasonable, and that they mean at the same time that the Commons are restored to their rights, that the Crown and the Peers should recover theirs. This answer has been ridiculed in my opinion with more wit, than solidity of argument. It has been represented as admitting that whilst the House of Commons continue corrupt, the King and Lords should submit to its decisions; but that when it should really speak the voice of the people, then it would be right to revive the dormant powers of resisting it.

For my part I agree in opinion with those who are for restoring to all parts of the state their just rights at the same time; to do it generally, nor partially, is what I must contend for. At the same time, I admit that I am not for restoring the negative of the crown. My reason is, *that it appears to me preposterous that the will of one man should for ever obstruct every regulation which all the rest of the nation may think necessary.* I object to it, as I would to any other prerogative of the crown, or privilege of the Lords or people, that is NOT FOUNDED ON REASON.

But I agree, that if the House of Commons was reduced to its natural dependence on the people alone, and the present system of making it the exclusive part of government was continued, we should approach to a pure democracy more than our constitution warrants, or than I wish to see. I am not for a democratic, any more than for an aristocratic, or monarchic government, solely; I am for that admirable mixture of the three, that our inimitable and comprehensive constitution has established: I wish to see the executive part of government revert to where the constitution has originally placed it, in the hands of the crown to be carried on by its
ministers :

ministers: those ministers under the controul of parliament; and parliament under the controul of the people. I would not have parliament made, as it daily is, a party concerned in every act of state, whereby it becomes the executive for which it is not calculated, and loses its superintending and controuling power, which is the main end of its institution. For when the two Houses are previously pledged by addresses, votes and resolutions, it becomes extremely difficult for them afterwards to censure measures in which they have been so deeply engaged by acts of their own. Another great inconvenience arises from parliament's taking so much of the executive of government on itself, which is, the excessive length of the sessions; an evil which of late has greatly increased. Now that parliament is engaged in every detail in order to screen the minister, it never can finish its business till the middle of the summer, when the independent country gentleman, tired of a long attendance and hot weather in town, is retired to his private business in the country, and that of the public left to be settled in thin houses by a few dependents of the minister. A short session of two or three months would be sufficient to examine the expenditure of former grants, to make new ones, to redress grievances, and pass such general laws as circumstances might require. The inconveniency and expence to a private member of parliament in attending his duty would then be trifling; and instead of forty commoners and three peers to form a quorum to decide the greatest matters of state, the attendance of two thirds of each body, which would give respect to their proceedings, might and ought to be required. I am also free to own my opinion, that when the House of Lords shall be effectually prevented from having any influence in the House of Commons, as I think it must by this bill, it should at the same time recover its equal rights in every respect with the House of Commons as a co-ordinate branch of the legislature. These sentiments are I think consonant to the Idea so well expressed in your letter to the volunteer army of the province of Ulster, "to restore to the Crown its original splendor, to nobility its ancient privileges, and to the nation at large its inherent rights."

I believe I have now troubled you with all that is necessary concerning my plan. My Bill will shew the detail as far as concerns the House of Commons and the election of Scotch Peers: The regulations for restoring to the crown its executive

tive and to the House of Lords its deliberative functions should be added to and form a part of this Bill ; but I have not as yet had time and leisure to prepare them.

In what I have said, I have shewn, my opinion concerning the 1st, 3d, 4th, 6th and 8th questions you have proposed to me. There remains the 2d, 5th and 7th to be considered.

In respect to the second, which I presume relates to the admission of Roman Catholics to vote at elections, I can only say, that the same principles which go to civil liberty, equally lead to liberty of conscience: I admire with you the glorious spirit of toleration which you say has united the once distracted inhabitants of Ireland into one indissoluble mass: And I am sure that nothing short of evident danger to the state can warrant its interference in religious opinions. But unacquainted as I am with the state of Ireland, it is impossible for me to know the present temper and disposition of the Roman Catholics there, and those only who are on the spot can judge how far exclusions of this sort are necessary, or ought to extend.

With regard to the 5th question, if voting by ballot is advisable? I am clearly of opinion that it is not. The idea of a ballot can have arisen but to avoid the effect of some improper influence; and I conceive it much more noble, directly to check that influence, than indirectly to evade it by concealment and deceit. I am convinced that trivial circumstances in things like this tend greatly to form the national character; and that it is most consistent with that of a British or Irish freeman, that all his actions should be open and avowed, and that he should not be ashamed of declaring in the face of his country whom he wishes to intrust with its interests. Upon the same idea that ballots may be a cover for independence, they must also be a cloak for bribery and a school for lying and deceit.

As to the 7th question, whether it would not be equitable or expedient that Boroughs now in the possession of individuals should be purchased by the nation? I think, that altho' no man can have a strict claim in equity to be refunded the lots of what neither buyer nor seller had a right to barter, yet it will be wise to purchase the good will, or at least to soften the resistance, of the present powerful possessors of boroughs by
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a most ample compensation. The liberties of a nation cannot be bought too dear ; but the whole cost of these boroughs would not amount to the profits of one jobbing contract.

I have now answered all the question you have been pleased to propose : but I must mention another advantage which ought to recommend the measures you are pursuing to every friend to the internal peace and quiet of the kingdom, which is, that when they people have obtained a regular, legal, and speedy way of giving effect to their sentiments, there can no longer be any apprehension of their endeavouring to redress themselves by mobs and tumults ; and even such regular and well-conducted meetings as yours will become needless. I mention this circumstance with the more satisfaction, as it stamps your conduct with the most unequivocal marks of disinterested patriotism. Power, when once acquired, is generally endeavoured to be preserved by its possessors ; but you after having taken up yours from necessity, and employed it usefully, are now endeavouring with unexampled virtue to render its continuance unnecessary. For great as your services have been, in so soon forming a complete army, in the advantages you have procured for your country, in the good order you have preserved, and in the efficacy you have given to law, you will derive still greater credit, in my opinion, from your good sense in seeing that a great military force to tally unconnected with the civil government cannot be a permanent establishment in a free country, whose first principle is never to trust absolute power in any hands whatever. Your present endeavours to restore the constitution to its purity and vigor evidently tend to make this and every extraordinary institution unnecessary : for when the people are fairly and equally represented in parliament, when they have annual opportunities of changing their deputies, and thro' them of controuling every abuse of government in a safe, easy, and legal way, there can be no longer any reason for recurring to those ever dangerous tho' sometimes necessary expedients of an armed force, which nothing but a bad government can justify. Such a magnanimous end to your proceedings, when after having restored liberty, commerce, and free government to your country, you shall voluntarily retire to the noble character of private Citizens, peacefully enjoying the blessings you have procured, will crown your labors with everlasting glory

glory, and is worthy the genuine patriotic spirit which animates the Irish Volunteers.

Before I conclude, I beg leave to express a wish that the mutually essential connection between Great Britain and Ireland may soon be settled on some liberal and fair footing. That which did subsist was on such narrow and absurd principles that no friend to either kingdom can regret its loss; founded on constraint and dependence, incompatible with the condition of freemen, Ireland had an indisputable right to dissolve it whenever she chose so to do. But surely, if we do not mean a total separation, it would be right to agree upon some new terms by which we are to continue connected. I have always thought it for the interest of the two Islands to be incorporated and form one and the same kingdom, with the same legislature meeting sometimes in Ireland as well as in England. But if there are difficulties to such an union not to be got over at present, some sort of *federal union* at least between the two kingdoms seems necessary to ascertain the many circumstances that concern their joint interests; and an union of this sort may now be formed with much greater propriety than before, as it will be sanctified by the free consent of independent nations.

I do conceive that some step of this sort is absolutely necessary, because the present footing, of separation rather than union, is too unfair to be able long to subsist. England, besides the load of the whole debt contracted for the use of both kingdoms, bears all the burdens of naval defence and foreign negotiations, and by far more than its proportion of the land service in time of war. But what is worse, is that there is no certainty now left that we shall have the same enemies and the same friends: Different interests as they may appear, may lead one kingdom to think a war necessary, and the other to remain in peace: The same King, in his different kingdoms, may think it wise to follow the advice of his respective parliaments: I need scarcely add, that the unavoidable consequences of such a difference are a *war* between the two kingdoms. Unless some settlement takes place upon these and many other important subjects, I am far from being clear that it will be for the advantage of liberty in either kingdom, that its Monarch should continue the sovereign of a neighbouring state with which it has no connection. I am sensible that there are great difficulties attending the adjustment of such an union, and that it requires great wisdom and temper to form it, especially on the part of Ireland, which
must

must feel that she ought to give the preponderance to Great Britain : but I am sure the business ought not to be neglected, and that every true friend to both kingdoms ought to give it his most zealous assistance.

I beg pardon for having gone into a subject not immediately belonging to that, upon which you have desired my opinion, but I thought it so connected with it, and at the same time so important, that I trust you will excuse my having introduced it. I fear I have been very long, but it was impossible for me to compress so much matter into a less compass, and when you wished to have my opinion I thought it best to give it fully, or at least as fully as I could in a letter. If it contains one thought that can be useful I shall be happy. I have only to assure the Committee of the zeal I feel for the cause the Volunteers have undertaken, to the support of which I shall ever be ready to give every assistance in my power ; and that it is with the highest respect and admiration for their conduct that I have the honour to be

Their most obedient

and most humble Servant

RICHMOND, &c.

August 15th, 1783.

To Lieut. Col. SHARMAN.

